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# EXAMINATION

Of the ALTERATIONS in the

## POOR'S LAWS,

PROPOSED BY Dr. BURN, *(Richard)*

And a REFUTATION of his Objections to  
WORKHOUSES, so far as they relate to  
HUNDRED HOUSES.

TOGETHER WITH

Observations upon the BILL lately offered to  
Parliament for "the better Relief and  
Employment of the Poor."

A N D

Some OBJECTIONS to a Proposal founded upon THAT  
Bill, for an Application to Parliament "for the Relief  
and more comfortable Maintenance of the Poor in the  
County of Norfolk."

THE WHOLE

Humbly submitted to the Consideration of the  
LEGISLATURE.

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## P R E F A C E.

AS the Author of the following Pages had no View to any private Interest, but only to the Public Good, the Reader will find in them none of the usual Arts of Controversy, *partial Quotations, wilful Misrepresentations, and unfair Innuendos*; by Means of which any Work, ever so benevolently planned and ingeniously executed, may be made to appear malicious and absurd. And as he does not question, but that the Writers, whose Schemes he examines, had the same disinterested Regard for the public Welfare, he makes no doubt that they will not only excuse, but approve the Freedom with which he canvasses their Sentiments. As to himself, he can truly say, that he has not a Wish, but that his Reasoning may be scrutinized with the same Freedom; he only begs it may be likewise with the same Candour and Impartiality he has examined theirs. For whatever may be

## P R E F A C E.

the Result of such an Enquiry, he has nothing to fear. As nothing can deprive him of the Satisfaction of reflecting, that he has performed his Duty, in communicating such Sentiments to the Public as he *believed* to be useful, though he should be disappointed in his Wish and Expectation that the following Pages *may be in fact beneficial* to his Fellow Creatures.





## SECTION I.

*Dr. Burn's Proposal for Alterations in the Poor's Laws examined: And his Objections, so far as they relate to Hundred Workhouses, refuted, both from Reason and Experience.*

THE learned and ingenious Author of the History of the Poor's Laws thinks, That too many Alterations in those Laws have been attempted to be made, by all the Writers who have hitherto proposed Schemes for the better Maintenance and Employment of the Poor. He therefore only offers the two following Alterations, or rather Additions to the Poor's Laws, for the Remedy of the Evils at present so justly complained of, and so sensibly felt. How far they seem calculated to effect the benevolent Purpose of their Author, I shall now proceed impartially to examine.

“ Let the present Laws (says the Doctor in Page  
 “ 203) stand, as to the main, only let *two* Particu-  
 “ lars be rectified, until Time and Experience shall  
 “ suggest further Alterations. One of the said Par-  
 “ ticulars is this: In the whole Series of Legisla-  
 “ tion above specified, it appears, that no sufficient

“ Provision hath been made to prevent the Nufance  
 “ of *common Begging*. Till this fhall be done, all  
 “ other Regulations of the wifeft Legiflature upon  
 “ Earth will be vain and fruitlefs. It fignifies no-  
 “ thing to provide for the Maintenance and Em-  
 “ ployment of thofe who can maintain themfelves  
 “ without Labour, and without being fubject to  
 “ Controul;” and in P. 207, he fays, “ There is  
 “ one infallible Way to put an End to all this, and  
 “ the eafieft in the World, which confifts merely  
 “ in a non-feifance: *Give them nothing*. If none  
 “ were to give, none would beg. And the whole  
 “ Myftery and Craft would be at an End in a Fort-  
 “ night. Let the Laws continue, if you please, to  
 “ apprehend and punifh the Mendicants: But let  
 “ fomething alfo be done effectually againft thofe  
 “ who encourage them. If the Principal be pu-  
 “ nifhed, it is not reasonable the Acceffary fhould go  
 “ free. In order to which, let all who relieve a  
 “ common Beggar be fubject to a Penalty.”

This indeed, in Speculation, appears to be an in-  
 fallible Method for the Suppreffion of Begging;  
 and accordingly we find that foreign Nations have  
 made this Provision, by impofing a Fine upon thofe  
 Perfons who fhall relieve Mendicants; and in our  
 own Country by the 23d of Ed. III. agreeably to  
 the cruel Policy of thofe Days, fuch Perfons were  
 to fuffer Imprifonment. But as effectual as it ap-  
 pears in Theory, it feems incapable of being put in  
 Practice; and every Law which cannot be executed,

is



is a Nufance instead of a Benefit. For who shall convict these Persons? The Beggar will not, and the other Poor dare not. Or who else would wish to offend a Person guilty of what, at worst, must be allowed to be an amiable Weakness? And should any one dare to attempt it, he would not fail to have his Action detested, even by those who at the same Time approved the good Intention of the Legislature in making the Provision.

It is evident, that in any Case, where Care is taken to remove the Inducements to the Commission of any Action, there, no penal Law is necessary; and that every Law must remain unexecuted, unless those who are to be intrusted with the Execution of it, are induced by some Motive to enforce it. But in the present Case, those who must be instrumental in executing the Law would be so far from having any Motive to enforce it, that they would have strong Incitements to the contrary.

Let us therefore examine into the Motives which induce well-meaning, but ill-judging People to *encourage* Beggars; and if we can discover a Method of eradicating these Motives, we shall perhaps more effectually, and I am sure more humanely, remove this Evil, than by endeavouring to extirpate Benevolence by the Fear of Punishment.

Now the only Motives are, I apprehend, the two following; compassionate People give to *all* Vagrants, rather because *some* are by Law permitted to

beg, and they are fearful lest in endeavouring to discourage the unlawful, they should punish the innocent; or, that though they know most of them are not tolerated by Law, and the Legislature has made a Provision for them in their respective Parishes, yet they esteem it a charitable Action to relieve them; because they think this Provision is in general very ill executed, and that the Poor suffer greatly from the Cruelty of their Overseers. To suppress Beggings therefore, nothing more seems to be necessary, than to take away the Toleration of all Beggars whatsoever, and to make such a Provision, that all who are unable to work may be certainly maintained; and that all who are able may effectually be employed. And as such a Scheme has been already proposed to the Public, it is evident that no Law is wanted for the Punishment of Compassion\*.

The other fundamental Defect in our present Poor's Laws, which the Doctor mentions, is, "That the whole, in a great Measure, and in Practice, indeed, altogether, is left to the Management of those annual Officers called Overseers of the Poor." He then gives a very just Representation of the Manner in which they use, or rather abuse, their Power; and adds:

\* See Mr. Cooper's "*Definitions and Axioms relative to Charity, Charitable Institutions, and the Poor's Laws*," in which he proposes a Scheme for *Hundred Workhouses* in Imitation of the *House of Industry* at *Nacton* in *Suffolk*. To which Work, it is to be wished the Author had prefixed a more popular Title, as it treats of Subjects of general Importance.

"The



“ The Remedy in this Case is not to abolish the  
 “ Office altogether. Let the Overseers continue ;  
 “ but let there be a general *Superintendant* over a  
 “ certain Number of Parishes, as the Justices in  
 “ Sessions shall find most convenient. Let the  
 “ Overseers collect the Poor Rate, but let them be  
 “ under the Direction of their Superior as to the  
 “ Disposal of it.” And in P. 214 and 215, he  
 says, “ Therefore let there be a general Overseer,  
 “ within each Hundred (for Instance) for that seems  
 “ the most apposite Division ; or if a Hundred be  
 “ too large, there may be two or more within such  
 “ Hundred. The said Overseer should be, not a  
 “ Person of the most eminent Rank and Dignity ;  
 “ for it is not to be supposed that such Persons  
 “ would sufficiently attend. He should not be of  
 “ the lowest Rank, lest something of Authority  
 “ should be wanting. In general, a Person about  
 “ the Degree of a *High Constable* seemeth most pro-  
 “ per ; and the High Constable himself in some  
 “ Hundreds, might perhaps be appointed with a  
 “ reasonable Addition to his Salary ; and this should  
 “ be according to the Extent of his Office : Each  
 “ Parish or Township should be required to pay so  
 “ much in the Pound according to the Poor Rates.  
 “ His Business should be, to require the Church-  
 “ wardens and Overseers within his District, to bring  
 “ him an Account in Writing, and renew the same  
 “ from Time to Time, of all the Poor within their  
 “ respective Parishes ; distinguishing therein their  
 “ Ages, Ability of Body, Disposition of Mind,  
 “ Trade or other Employment, and what they are  
 “ most



“ most apt and fit for ; and from thence take his  
 “ Measures for their Relief and Employment : And  
 “ particularly to provide Work, according to the  
 “ Manufactures of the several Places, or to set up  
 “ some easy Manufacture, if there shall chance to  
 “ be none.”

Now in order to form any tolerable Judgment of this Question, prior to Experience, Whether the Poor are likely to be better managed under this Regulation than any other which has hitherto been proposed, the only Method is, by examining, whether these proposed Superintendants are in general likely to have *better Abilities* or *stronger Motives* to induce them to manage the Poor properly, than any others who have been recommended as proper Persons to be made Governors of the Poor : For if they are likely in general to be superior to all others in both these Circumstances, especially the latter, then it is probable that the Poor will be best governed under their Superintendency ; if not, then it is certain they will not be so well governed by them as by others.

But I think it must be intuitively evident, that these Superintendants must be vastly inferior in both these Circumstances to the Persons proposed in the Definitions and Axioms, “ viz. the Gentlemen, Clergy, &c. in their respective Hundreds.” The latter surely must be allowed by every one to have more Humanity to relieve, to be better qualified to manage, and to be more interested to employ the Poor,

Poor, than the former. Besides, that the same Power which in the one Case would be intrusted to one Man, would, in the other, be divided amongst several. Nay, the former do not seem likely to be either superior in Abilities, which is indeed the *least* Consideration, or to have stronger Motives to incite them to a proper Execution of their Office, which is the *greatest*, even than those very Overseers of whom they are proposed to be the Superintendants. They may indeed be said to have a stronger Inducement to relieve the Aged and Infirm, and all who are incapable of Work in those Parishes to which they are *not* Contributors; because then, Compassion, if they have any, must exert itself; as it cannot be combated by Avarice. But in Reference to the *Employment* of the Poor in the same Parishes, which, as the ingenious Doctor himself observes, is the Object which requires most Attention at present; in this respect, they have not the same Motives which the Overseers themselves have; as they will not be in the least benefited by the Diminution of the Rates, which the Employment of the Poor will occasion. In those Parishes in which they pay to the Poor's Rates, they will have exactly the same Motives with the Overseers; but if their *Motives* be only the *same*, what Reason is there to think that their *Conduct* will be *different*? It would therefore surely have been better to have proposed, that the Salaries of these Superintendants should arise out of the Profits accruing from the Labour of the Poor; as this would have been giving them an additional Motive for furnishing the Poor with Employment.

Whereas, on the contrary, a certain Salary must necessarily make them negligent and careless in the Execution of their Office,

But secondly, Supposing these Superintendants would have more prevalent Motives than the present Overseers, yet as Dr. Burn proposes, that the other Parts of the Law should continue as they are at present, this Proposal of Superintendants seems to be entirely useless; as the present Laws give no one a Power of compelling the Overseers to set the Poor to work. For our Legislature seems to have imagined, with some Appearance of Reason, that the Advantages necessarily resulting to the Contributors to the Rates from the Labour of Paupers, would be sufficient to induce them to furnish the Poor with Employment. Not considering that the generality of Mankind are much more deterred by the Dread of Punishment, than allured by the Hope of Profit.

And thirdly, Even upon the Supposition that this compulsory Power was given to these Superintendants (which seems to be too great to be entrusted with so small a Number, and with such kind of People) it would be impossible for them to keep the Poor regularly to work, or to have the Children of Paupers taught any useful Manufacture, so long as they are scattered in separate Families. But if the Education and Employment of Children were the only Advantages, which would accrue from the Establishment of the Houses for which I am contending,

ing, these Circumstances would surely alone be sufficient to recommend them. In the *Nation* House of Industry, Children are taught to read till they are five Years old; and how pleasing is it to see them go from their School to the picking of Oakum, or turning the Wheels of the Manufactory, not by Compulsion, but by Choice. Such is the Effect of Imitation in the youngest Minds, where a general Spirit of Industry prevails! And how different a Scene does this convey to the Reader's *Imagination*, from what every Country Village (where these Houses are not established) presents to his *Sight*!

In respect to the *Houses*, into which the Poor should be collected, to be provided with Sustenance, to have their Diseases cured, and to be employed in Work; after objecting to County Hospitals on Account of the Unhealthiness which would attend the Collection of such a Number of Persons under one Roof; the learned Doctor proceeds to object to *all* Work-houses, even where a less Number would live together, " That they seem to annihilate all *Family*  
 " *Connections*, except that of one great Family under one Head. The Men (says he) are proposed  
 " to be kept a-part; so likewise the Women, that  
 " there will be a *populus virorum* and a *populus mulierum*, which no doubt would lessen the Number  
 " of Poor, both by hindering those who are already married from propagating their Kind, and  
 " discouraging all other poor Persons, or Persons  
 " of small, or even middling Fortunes from marrying ;



“ rying; for who would enter into the State of  
 “ Wedlock, when he does not know but, in the  
 “ Uncertainty of human Affairs, he may fall into  
 “ Poverty, and the Consequence of that Poverty  
 “ will be a Divorce and Separation from his Wife  
 “ and Children, so as to have no future Intercourse  
 “ and Communication with them.”

This Objection, allowing it all the Force which  
 can be desired, and more than it can properly claim,  
 is at best an Objection only to some *particular* Plans  
 for Work-houses, not to Work-houses in *general*. But  
 I apprehend the Objection is founded upon a Want  
 of sufficient Consideration of the Numbers who  
 would be admitted into the Houses for which I am  
 pleading. The only Reasons the Poor can have for  
 wanting Assistance must be these: Either 1<sup>st</sup>, that they  
 are by Age and Infirmities *incapable of Labour*; or  
 2<sup>dly</sup>, that they are *not able to procure Work*; or  
 3<sup>dly</sup>, that the Profits of their Work *will not main-  
 tain themselves, their Wives and Families*; or lastly,  
 that they are not *willing* to be employed. Suppose  
 a poor Person therefore to apply to the Governors  
 of these Houses for Relief, if he is by Age and In-  
 firmities rendered *incapable of Work*, here an Asylum  
 is opened to him, in which he may pass the Even-  
 ing of his Days with Ease of Body, Peace of Mind,  
 and Competence of Provision. If he is *not able to  
 procure Work*, which happens only to a few during  
 a small Part of the Year, here he may be employ'd  
 till he shall find Work elsewhere; but during his  
 Stay,

Stay, if he be industrious, he will have many Encouragements and Rewards \*; and as the Governors have several discretionary Powers, they will no doubt permit him on Holidays to see his Wife and Family. If it appear that the *Profits of his Work will not maintain all his Family*, then his Children will be received into these Houses; will be inured to moderate Labour, and instructed in Religion. If a Man is *not willing to work*, then indeed by being sent to these Houses he will be *compelled*; and when once he shall find, that if he will not work at home, he will be obliged to work here, he will soon be fit to return and become industrious at home. From hence it appears then, that these Houses would be chiefly filled with the Aged and Infirm, with Orphans, and the Children of those Parents who are not capable of maintaining them: Confe-

\* In the *Nation House*, Two-pence in every Shilling is allowed to the Poor out of the Profits of their Labour, as an Encouragement to Industry. In any Time of Scarcity, therefore, when Provisions are so dear that a Man cannot maintain himself at Home, and he would not otherwise know where to fly, but to the inhospitable Doors of a Parish Officer, still more cruel than the Season; here an Asylum unfolds its friendly Gates for his Reception, offers to him a better Table, Lodging, and Fire, whilst the Time of scarcity continues, than he can ever afford himself in Seasons of the greatest Plenty, and at the End of the Time opens its Gates for his Return, and offers him a Reward proportioned to his Industry. Admirable Provision! Happy Country! where the Inequalities of Fortune and the Evils of Nature are scarcely felt, but where *Poverty* herself, in Times of the greatest Scarcity, sits smiling in the midst of Plenty.

quently they would not, in case of a Separation of Man and Woman, discourage Matrimony, and lessen the Numbers of Mankind †.

I shall now beg leave to take Notice of another Objection to Work-houses (though not mentioned by Dr. Burn) which has been urged in several periodical Papers, and asserts, that they are Infringements upon Liberty.

Were this really the Case, no one would more abhor than myself, to urge any Thing in their Favour. May not only Britons, but every Nation on the Earth, ever for the future enjoy the inestimable Blessing of Liberty in the utmost possible Perfection. But perhaps there is scarcely any Benefit more vehemently desired, and less understood. It is the Cry of almost every Mouth, the Wish of almost every Heart, yet scarcely any Understanding has fully comprehended it, and no Pen has accurately defined it. A Dissertation upon this Subject, is amongst the most important Desiderata of Politics, and would some accurate philosophic Genius, such as the Author of *Hermes* and the three Treatises, undertake the Task, he would execute a Work of the greatest Benefit to Mankind. But it is sufficient for my present Purpose to observe, that no one, I presume, under the Pretence of being an Advocate for Li-

† Constant Experience evinces the Truth of this Reasoning, in the *Nation* House of Industry, as I have been lately informed.

berly,

erty, will plead for an *unlimited Freedom*, and an entire Removal of all Restraints. Whatever the Wishes of some may be, they at least pay so much Deference to the Opinions of the sober and rational Part of Mankind as to conceal and disguise them. And I think I may venture to take it for granted, that the following Proposition will be universally admitted as an Axiom, *viz.* “*That no Individual ought to have the Liberty of doing any Actions which are inconsistent with the general Happiness of that Society of which he is a Member.*” From hence then it follows, that as Idleness is utterly subversive of every Community, Workhouses in which the idle are compelled to labour, and such Children whose Parents are not able to maintain them in Idleness, and must have become burdensome to the Public, are furnished with Employment suitable to their Age, can never be considered as imposing any improper Restraints upon Men’s Actions, by any rational Advocate for Liberty. And as to the Confinement of the aged and infirm in these Houses and their Precincts, with whom and Children they will be chiefly filled, and in which they will be well fed, lodged and clothed, this was never, that I ever heard, made an Objection to our numerous Hospitals, by any even of the most zealous Partizans of Licentiousness.

But to return to the learned Author of the History of the Poor’s Laws.

In



In Page 233d he observes, " That supposing a  
 " Workhouse intended to be built, for any County  
 " or other large District, and Advertisements issued  
 " for Workmen to deliver in their respective Plans ;  
 " it is great Odds, but in order to shew their ab-  
 " surd Skill in Architecture, they will produce to  
 " you Models fitter for a Royal Palace. It is a  
 " humble Habitation for the Poor that is wanted.  
 " And it is a Kind of Insult upon Poverty, to go  
 " about to lodge poor People in a superb Edi-  
 " fice."

But this likewise, as well as the Doctor's former,  
 is only an Objection to what *may* be an Abuse of  
 Workhouses, not to what certainly *must*, or is even  
 likely to be. For the Legislature may at once pre-  
 vent this, by empowering the Gentlemen, &c. of  
 their respective Hundreds, only to borrow such a  
 Sum of Money, as will enable them to build a *de-*  
*cent and convenient House*, not a *grand and sumptuous*  
*Palace*. Besides, if this was any real Objection,  
 would it not likewise avail in Respect to the Houses  
 which the Doctor himself proposes. For though  
 these Houses are proposed to be small, the same Fol-  
 ly might proportionably appear in unnecessary Ex-  
 pences. For, says the Doctor, it is humbly sub-  
 mitted, " Whether, instead of one large Building  
 " to contain one immense Family, it would not be  
 " much preferable to build several small Houses  
 " contiguous, so as to receive separate Families,  
 " with Rooms or Apartments therein, some more,  
 " some fewer, some larger, others smaller, accord-  
 " ing

“ing to the Number and Circumstances of a  
 “Man’s Family that may be brought to be lodged  
 “there.”——“Several Reasons (he says) offer to  
 “recommend this Form.”

The first Reason the Doctor assigns, is, “That  
 “this Way seems to be least expensive.” But, on  
 the contrary, I am sorry to observe, that this seems  
 to be far from being the Case. It would indeed  
 be attended with a more gradual, and consequently  
 a less Expence at *first*; for the second Reason the  
 Doctor mentions, “That one or two such Fabrics  
 may be set up in a Year, and thereby Trial made  
 with little Charge, how the Project is likely to suc-  
 ceed; others may still be added, if need be, un-  
 til the Houses even make up a small Town;” but  
 in the *End*, when all the requisite Houses were built,  
 it is surely apparent that this Scheme would be infi-  
 nitely most expensive. For, let us consider, that if  
 instead of only one Building in every large Hundred,  
 or in every two small ones, which is to contain an  
 Infirmary, a Workhouse, and a House of Cor-  
 rection, separate Houses are to be built for every poor  
 Family which requires Assistance (for this I take to  
 be the Doctor’s Meaning), besides the vast Diffe-  
 rence only in the Expence of Building, with what  
 a prodigious greater Expence must the latter Scheme  
 be attended than the former, in Respect to Firing,  
 Nurseries for the Sick, and other Officers. It is sure-  
 ly self-evident, that 200 Persons can be maintained  
 much

much cheaper, when collected into one House, than when dispersed in fifty different Places.

The third Reason the Doctor assigns, is, “ That  
 “ the Poor will desire this Method infinitely be-  
 “ fore the other, and consequently will set about  
 “ their Labour with more Alacrity.” But I must  
 beg Leave to ask, What Poor ? If the idle ; it must  
 be, because they think this Method most favourable  
 to Indolence, and for that very Reason the other  
 must be best. As to the Aged, the Infirm, and the  
 Industrious, though they may, perhaps, at first, dis-  
 like these Hundred Houses on account of their No-  
 velty, yet Experience has shewn, that when they  
 were once sensible of the much greater Humanity  
 with which they were treated by the Governors of  
 these Houses, than they before were by the Over-  
 seers, they blest their Benefactors for the happy  
 Exchange of a Town-house for a House of Indus-  
 try \*.

The

\* It must be confessed, and the late Riots in Suffolk plainly  
 evince it, that the Poor in *general*, who have never been in these  
 Houses, have very mistaken Prepossessions, and very strong Pre-  
 judices against them. Prejudices, which the Farmers (who are  
 not willing to be deprived of the Importance and Profits of the  
 Office of Overseer) endeavour to raise and confirm, by repre-  
 senting these Houses, not as Places of Relief, but of Punishment.  
 Where an imperious Task-master will be set over them, and  
 compel them to slave, without any compassion to the Tenderness  
 of Infancy, or the Infirmities of Age. So easy is it to persuade  
 the Multitude, that what is most meant for their Benefit, is in-  
 tended

The Doctor's fourth Reason is, " That the  
 " connubial State will not be infringed, nor con-  
 " sequently the Nation thereby depopulated."  
 But I have already shewn, that this is not an Ad-  
 vantage which peculiarly attends this Method.

His fifth Reason is, " That the Health of Indi-  
 " viduals will be consulted by this Method, and in-  
 " fectious Distempers not so certainly propagated."  
 But the first Circumstance only evinces the Prefe-  
 rence of this Method to County Hospitals, not to  
 the *Hundred Houses* \*. And in Respect to infecti-  
 ous

tended for their Injury : A Mistake which Time and Experience  
 will soon rectify in *them*, and which demands in *others* the  
 steadiest Resolution, and at the same Time the mildest and most  
 lenient Measures. A Woman had such terrible Apprehensions  
 of entering into the House at *Narston*, that the Night before  
 she was sent there, she attempted to destroy herself. But she  
 was soon, not only reconciled to it, but so fond of her Habita-  
 tion, that she declared, she had never before been so happy in  
 her Life.

\* When the Poor were first admitted into the House at *Nar-  
 ston*, large Numbers of them died weekly, to the great Distress  
 and Concern of the Directors; they having not only the com-  
 mon Feelings of Humanity to afflict them, but a Danger to their  
 own Characters and Persons to alarm them. For if they could  
 not have remedied this Evil, popular Clamour would have quick-  
 ly reported, and popular Prejudice would as readily have be-  
 lieved, that the Design of their Undertaking was not to allevi-  
 ate the Miseries of Poverty, but to exterminate the Paupers.  
 They were, however, some Time before they could discover the  
 Cause, attributing it to some Defect in the House, fearing that  
 as the Rooms of such an House cannot well be too lofty, spaci-



ous Disorders, these surely will be less propagated by having one Pest-house in every Hundred, or in every two Hundreds, than by having them in every Parish.

Sixthly. The Doctor observes, " That this Scheme is equally applicable to a small as a large Community; to a County, to a Hundred, to one or two Parishes, or to a small Township." But this by no Means appears to be the Case. For the Children of the Hundred or County (who ought to be the principal Objects of our Consideration in Proposals of this Kind) must either remain as at present, totally unemployed, or, according to this Plan, Houses must be built for all the Parents of these Children near the Place of Manufacture. A Scheme which would be big with Confusion, and would burthen the Householder with an unnecessary, and even a more intolerable Expence than he is incumbered with at present.

ous and airy, that theirs were not enough so; for of the Healthiness of the Situation there could be no Doubt. Some Alterations were accordingly made in the House (though it is now to be wished that the Rooms in general were still more lofty, and some of them more airy and spacious) but without producing the Effect intended. However, at last, the Misfortune was found to be entirely owing to the sudden Change of the Diet of the Poor. They having been used to subsist at Home upon such miserable Food, that the nourishing Diet given them in the House of Industry occasioned Surfeits. But the Governor having, since that Time, *gradually* habituated the Poor to the usual Diet of the House, they have continued very healthy.

The

The seventh and last Reason, our ingenious and learned Author mentions, is this; “ That if, after  
 “ Trial, it shall appear, that the Project of erecting  
 “ Workhouses shall be ineffectual to the End proposed, or some better Course in future Times shall  
 “ be suggested, these Buildings nevertheless will not  
 “ be without their Use; for being in the Form of  
 “ other Houses in the Neighbourhood, they may  
 “ easily be converted to other Purposes: But those  
 “ other enormous Buildings will not be so evidently  
 “ useful in any other Way.” This indeed, though it is not a sufficient Reason for the espousing of one Scheme, is certainly a sufficient Reason against the engaging in the other without the utmost Caution and Circumspection. And indeed no Innovation whatever, especially in an Affair of so much Importance, ought to be made, till after the most accurate Consideration of all its Conveniences and Inconveniences, and till there appears the highest Degree of Probability of its Success. But in respect to the principal Parts of the Scheme mentioned in the Definitions and Axioms, *Experience* has already testified in its Favour. It has been attended with so great Success in the Hundreds of Colneis and Carlford, that several other Hundreds in Suffolk, and some in Norfolk, have obtained Acts to be incorporated in the same Manner.

The Scheme, therefore, of *Hundred Workhouses*, or *Houses of Industry*, does not solicit the Approbation of the Public, like the airy, unsubstantial Plan

of an ideal Theorist, built (if I may be allowed the Expression) on 'the baseless Fabric of a Vision;' but demands public Countenance and Esteem, as founded by Reason on certain Principles of human Nature, under the Direction and Guidance of Experience herself.

S E C.

## SECTION II.

*Remarks upon the Bill, lately offered to Parliament,  
for the better Relief, and Employment of the  
Poor.*

THIS Scheme seems materially to differ from Mr. Cooper's Proposal for *Hundred Workhouses*, in no Respect but this, that Counties should be first divided into more regular and uniform Districts than *Hundreds*, before Workhouses be erected. But the Reasons assigned for this Alteration in the Bill as first published, do not seem to be sufficient. For this ingenious Writer agrees with the Advocates for the *Hundred Workhouses*, that parochial ones would be too *small*, and County ones too *large*; but thinks, that Hundred Workhouses would be liable to the same Objections: which appears by no Means to be the Case.

For the Reason why parochial Workhouses would be too small, is 1<sup>st</sup>, Because there could not be a Number of proper Directors of them; as they must be left to the Direction of those who are at present entrusted with the Management of the Poor, and from whom it is highly necessary *that* Office should be taken. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That there would not be a sufficient Number of Paupers in each House, to answer the Expence of establishing a Manufactory, nor  
large



large Contributions enough to afford a sufficient Salary for a proper Governor.

As to *County Workhouses*, the *principal* Objection to them (amongst many others) is, that though by their Means, the Management of the Poor would be taken out of the Hands of the present Directors, the Number of Paupers in them would be too great to be under proper Government and Direction.

But the same Objections cannot be urged with Propriety against *Hundred Workhouses*. For if a Workhouse in one Hundred would be too small, and be liable to almost the same Objections with a parochial one, this may be removed by taking in another Hundred, or even two, if it be necessary. And that no one *Hundred*, or even two or three *Hundreds* united (where one or two alone would be too small) can ever be liable to the same Objections as a *County Workhouse*, is too evident to want any Proof.

It has indeed been said by the ingenious and benevolent Gentleman \*, who inserted in one of the monthly Publications an Account of the State of the *Nacton* House of Industry, that the Number of Parishes in the *Hundreds of Colneis and Carlford*

\* The Reverend Mr. Canning of Ipswich, whose indefatigable Assiduity in establishing the House at *Nacton*, deserves the best thanks of every Friend to the Poor, and Wellwisher to the Publick.

are

are rather too small, “ That the Governors could  
 “ provide for fifty more than are now generally in  
 “ the House with the same Help they now have ;  
 “ and therefore, had they incorporated a few more  
 “ Parishes, as their Income would then have been  
 “ larger, they could have saved something more.”  
 But as the Numbers in such a House are frequently  
 fluctuating, and in Case of any epidemical Distem-  
 per, or extraordinary Dearness of Provision, Num-  
 bers will croud in suddenly ; it seems better, that  
 there should be rather more Nurses, Servants, &c.  
 than are absolutely necessary for the Numbers which  
 are in general in the House. 2dly, As this was the  
 first House of the Kind that was ever established,  
 and this Account was written not long after its Es-  
 tablishment, the Smallness of the Numbers might  
 be only accidental, and proceed from some Paupers  
 quitting these Hundreds to gain Settlements in other  
 Places.

Another Reason assigned in this Scheme, for pre-  
 ferring Workhouses in other Districts than Hun-  
 dreds is, because “ Hundreds afford no precise  
 “ Boundaries or Jurisdictions with respect to the  
 “ Poor.” But this Objection *may be easily*, and  
*has been*, indeed, already obviated in some *Acts*  
 which have been passed for the Incorporation of  
 Hundreds. By which *Acts* it has been enjoined,  
 “ That such Parishes as have paid to the Poor’s  
 “ Rates of any Parishes within the Hundreds in-  
 “ tended to be incorporated, should be included ;  
 “ though

“ though they themselves are not within the Hundreds.”

It is evident, therefore, that there is no *Necessity* for the Division of Counties into any other Districts than Hundreds, for the Reasons assigned in this Bill. And if there be *no Necessity for it*, there is certainly a very *strong Reason against it*. For it ought to be a fundamental Principle in Proposals of this Kind, to admit no more Innovations than are absolutely necessary; as it is never easy to convince the Bulk of a Nation of the Utility of a new Scheme; and the Generality of Mankind would almost always prefer an usual and antient Practice or Custom, with some Inconveniencies, to a new one, without them.

But if, for any Reason which has not yet been assigned, such as the more easy Attendance of the Directors (which is the only one I can think of) new Divisions should be thought necessary; surely it would be better to leave them to the Discretion of the Persons qualified to be Directors, than to have only seven Persons chosen in every County by Ballot, (as is proposed in this Bill) to appoint the several Districts, and fix upon the Spot where each House is to be built. For can these seven Persons, who may all happen to live in one Corner of a County, be such good Judges of the Districts proper to be incorporated, forty Miles from their own Habitations, as the Gentlemen resident in that Place?

In respect to the *Directors*, it is, I think, proposed in this Scheme, “ That none should continue in Office above one or two Years at a Time.” But *Quære*, whether the Method used in those Hundreds which are already incorporated, of chusing *some* to be *perpetual* Directors, is not better? As Gentlemen, when they are sure of having some other Gentlemen in Concert with them, will more readily give their Attendance; which is a very principal Intention of this Scheme, and without which, no considerable Benefit can, but much Evil may, accrue from it.

As to the *Relief* of the Poor out of these Houses, it is, I think, by this Bill, proposed; “ That the “ Overseers, by the Advice and Order of the Directors, at their weekly Meetings and *not otherwise*, may allow occasional Relief to any poor “ Householder, who by Sickness, or any other unavoidable Accident, may be reduced to Distress, “ and be thought improper to be removed to the “ Hospital.” But a Provision of this Kind ought to be made with the strictest Limitations; for otherwise, such an Exception may totally defeat the End and Intention of the whole Scheme. *Quære* therefore, Whether any Relief should be allowed to any Paupers out of the House, but to such as are incapable of being removed without Danger to their Lives? And whether it should not be left to the Humanity and Charity of the Directors, not as a *Corporation*, but as *Individuals*, to alleviate the Hardship of this *general* Rule, in *particular* Cases? But



*Quære* likewise, whether Overseers ought not to have a Power of giving Relief, and sending a Surgeon to a Pauper, without the Advice and Order of the Directors at a weekly Meeting? As without this Provision, Paupers might frequently die for Want of Assistance. But the Overseers should have no Power of granting further Relief, without the Advice and Order of the next weekly Committee, where the Surgeon should be obliged to declare, whether he thinks the Pauper fit to be removed; and if he does, an Order should be immediately made for his Removal to the Infirmary of the District.

Lastly, It is humbly submitted to the Wisdom of the Legislature, whether the principal Circumstance wanted for the better Relief and Employment of the *Poor*, be not a *general* Bill to empower, not to enforce, the Incorporation of Parishes, without the Expence of a *particular* Act of Parliament for *each* District. But however particular it may be requisite the Bill should be in other Respects, whether all that is necessary in respect to the Size of the Districts, be not, that they shall not contain more than *such* a Number of Parishes (fifty for Instance) nor fewer than twenty; if upon the most accurate Computation which can be made, the former Number of Parishes shall contain more than 300 Paupers, or the latter less than twenty? But as to the Choice of the Districts within these Limitations, may not *that* be safely left to the Discretion of the Directors in their respective Neighbourhoods; who, as they are best able to judge of, so without doubt they will most carefully

carefully attend to the Largeness of the Parishes, and the Convenience of Attendance. And surely there can be no Question, but that the Directors will act with much more Spirit and Unanimity (which is absolutely requisite, and almost the only thing necessary in a Scheme of this kind) when they act in concert with others by mutual Agreement, than when the Division of the Districts, and consequently, in reality, the Choice of their Coadjutors, is left to others.

## SECTION III.

*Strictures on the Proposal for the Relief, and more comfortable Maintenance, of the Poor in the County of Norfolk.*

THE public-spirited Author of this Proposal for the County of Norfolk in particular, has founded it almost entirely upon the *general* Bill which was examined in the last Section. If therefore the Objections *there* urged be of any Force against *that* Bill, they must equally affect *this* Proposal.

This Author has taken the Pains to divide the County of Norfolk into such Districts, as he thinks will answer the Purposes of that Bill. “ The fixing of which Districts (he observes) is very difficult, perhaps the most so in the whole Proposal. But he hopes, every Well-wisher to the Proposal will submit to the general Conveniency, where it happens not to be quite so for particular Parishes, for some must be the most distant in every Division. The great Object (says he) is to have the Districts so fixed, that none, or very few, of the Directors may be more than an Hour or two’s Ride from the House; for that being provided for, the Districts can’t be too large; as the Ex-  
“ pence

“pence of Governors and Servants will be greatly  
 “lessened by larger Numbers, which will appear to  
 “any one who will examine the Norwich Houses.”

The first Observation which must necessarily occur to any one upon the Perusal of this Paragraph, is, that it confirms the Propriety of the Proposal made in the Conclusion of the preceding Section, viz. *That the Choice of the Districts should be left to the Directors themselves.* For if there be so much Difficulty for any one at a Distance to fix them; and some Individuals must necessarily submit to Inconveniencies for the general Advantage, as this Writer observes;—Will they not be more likely to carry this Scheme into Execution, when these Inconveniencies are the Consequences of their own Choice, and they are to submit to them from an evident Conviction of their Necessity, than when they are absolutely obliged to submit to Inconveniencies which they will think, and in many Cases very justly, that they could considerably have diminished, had the Division of the Districts been left to their own Discretion.

Secondly, No Observation can be more unfortunate than this, That “the Districts cannot be too  
 “large, if they be but convenient for the Attendance of the Directors.” That “the Expence of Governors and Servants, &c. will be much lessened by large Numbers,” is indeed indisputably true. If therefore the *Diminution of the Rates* was the *only*  
 Object



Object of Consideration, and the proper Care and Relief of the Poor was worthy of no Regard, too many indeed could not, in *that Case*, be huddled together; and the faster the Poor died, the sooner would the Rates be diminished, and the End proposed, answered. But I am sure the reputed Author of this Proposal has too much Benevolence ever to have made it, had he considered the shocking Consequences of it. And as he must be sensible, that the *better* Relief and Employment of the Poor are the *primary* Objects of Attention, and a Diminution of the Rates only a *secondary* one, he must confess that nothing can be more contrary to the very *fundamental* Principle of a Bill of this Kind, than such a Division of a County into Districts as here proposed, without any Regard to the *Number* of Paupers in those Districts. And consequently that, for the Reasons I have assigned in the foregoing Section, some such Limitations in the Numbers as I have *there* proposed, are absolutely necessary.

Thirdly, Another very *material* Circumstance is *totally* unattended to in this Writer's Division of his County, I mean the *Number* of the *Directors*: For in *some* Circuits of seven or eight Miles (the Size of the Districts proposed) it happens that a much greater Number of Persons are qualified for Directors than are wanted; in *others*, not near so many as are necessary. So that in this Proposal, the two most *fundamental* Points seem to be *entirely neglected*.

In

In the Bill offered to Parliament, 20 *l.* a Year was proposed as a Salary to a Clergyman, for the Performance of his Office in one of these Houses. But it is proposed by this Gentleman, that the Arch-deacon should *annually, quarterly, or monthly*, appoint some of the Rectors, &c. in the District to attend the House, catechise the Children, preach once a Week at least, read Prayers twice in a Day, and at such *other* Times as the Directors shall appoint,—*gratis*. How far this Proposal will be agreeable to the Clergy, I shall leave to *them* to determine: And how far it is *equitable* that the Clergy should have this Charge imposed upon them, over and above the Trouble of being Directors; and how far this would be consistent with their present Duty, I shall leave to the Public in general to decide.

These are the only material Deviations in this Proposal from the Bill before examined. The rest are rather Additions for the Explanation of the Meaning of it, than Alterations. I shall therefore finish this Section with two or three additional Remarks upon that Bill, which occurred to me upon reading it in this Proposal.

As an Amendment in the Naſton Bill, it was proposed in the “Definitions and Axioms,” and adopted in this Bill, “That no Farmers should be  
“admitted as acting Guardians, who occupied less  
“than 100 *l.* a Year.” But ought not this Provision to be made with the following Exceptions:

1<sup>st</sup>,

1st, When a Farmer occupies 100 *l.* a Year, though the *whole* is not within the District. 2dly, When what a Farmer occupies, and what he owns, within the District, amounts to 100 *l.* a Year. 3dly, Quær. whether one, or the two largest Farmers in a Parish ought not to be admitted as Guardians, though they do *not* occupy 100 *l.* a Year, if there be no Farmer in the Parish who does. All these Exceptions seem necessary, and the last for these Reasons ; That every Parish ought to have at *least* one Guardian for its Representative ; and because one Parish knows very little of the Poor of other Parishes.

It is only proposed in this Bill, that “ if the Parents, Kindred, or Friends of any of the Children maintained by a House of Industry, should at any Time become capable of maintaining and employing them, it should be *lawful* for the Directors to dismiss them, if they shall *think proper*.” But should they not rather in this Case be *obliged* to dismiss them ? As certainly all Parents, whose Children are not burdensome to the Public, have a natural Right, and consequently should have a lawful Power to dispose of them as they think proper.

It is likewise *only* proposed in this Bill, that the Persons who clandestinely *dispose* of any thing out of the House, should be punished. But should there not likewise be a Penalty inflicted upon the Receiver ?

Lastly,

Lastly, It is humbly submitted to the Wisdom of the Legislature, whether amongst the Alterations in the Bill, proposed in this and the last Section, there be not wanted a Constable or Bailiff to each House, for the apprehending of Vagrants and other Offenders. For it is found in the Hundreds of Colneis and Carlford, that the Constables there are very remiss in their Duty; and as they know that they shall pay no more to the Rates, they frequently encourage a Fellow to escape, who leaves a Woman and Child to be provided for by the House.

### *Conclusion.*

Should the foregoing Observations and Remarks, appear satisfactory to the Public; should it be thought, that the first Section has fully answered all the Objections which can be urged to *Hundred-Work-houses*, and that it has clearly evinced the Necessity of a *general* Bill, founded upon some such Plan as that for the better Relief and Employment of the Poor; should it be likewise acknowledged, that the Objections urged to the *general* Bill, and the particular one for the County of Norfolk, are just, it will be very easy to draw up *another general* Bill upon the Principle laid down in the second Section, with the other Deviations from the late Bill here proposed. This however I purposely avoided; because some of it would have been only a Repetition of the former



mer Bill, and the *Reasons* upon which the rest is founded could not have been so clearly seen, nor so fully demonstrated; and far be it from me to presume or wish to *dictate*, my only Aim and Desire being to *convince*.



F I N I S.

